

Azadliq Prospekti 83  
AZ1007 Baku, Azerbaijan  
Phone: ++ (99412) 498 03 35  
Fax: ++ (99412) 498 93 12  
HuseynguliyevMM@state.gov

# RELEASE NEWS

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THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION / EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## **U.S. AMBASSADOR TO SWEAR IN NEW PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS**

**August 4, 2005**

United States Ambassador Reno Harnish will swear in the third group of Peace Corps trainees in Azerbaijan at the Chemical Palace in Sumgait at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, August 5, 2005. The program will also include remarks by representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economic Development, Peace Corps Country Director Zoltan Szigethy, training staff, and the new Volunteers themselves.

President John F. Kennedy founded the Peace Corps in 1961. Since then, more than 170,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps Volunteers in some 140 countries throughout the world. Volunteers help promote peace and friendship by giving of their time and talent during three months of training in the language, culture and technical needs of each country, followed by two years of service to that country.

Peace Corps Volunteers have been working in Azerbaijan since 2003 at the invitation of the Azerbaijani government. The 50 Volunteers already working in Azerbaijan are all English teachers in schools in cities and villages throughout Azerbaijan. In cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development, a number of organizations have been selected to host a pilot group of community economic development Volunteers starting this year.

Members of the third group of Volunteers, including 22 English teachers and 14 community economic development advisers, have lived with host families in and around Devechi and Siyazan while intensively studying Azerbaijani language and culture. During their two years of service, the Peace Corps English Teaching Volunteers will help secondary school students and teachers increase their knowledge of English and improve their communication skills. Community Economic Development Volunteers will help improve business practices by strengthening non-governmental organizations that work with local businesses. The Peace Corps looks forward to working with Azerbaijani citizens and the Azerbaijani government to secure a better, more prosperous future for all Azerbaijanis.

***NOTE TO MEDIA: All media are invited to the event. For additional information please contact the US Embassy press service at 498 03 35/36/37.***